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FEMA

Disaster News

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NORTH DAKOTA DISASTER UPDATE

A summary of significant items and issues related to the FEMA/State recovery efforts following the May 5, 2004, major disaster declaration for flooding and severe storms:

- On March 29, 2004, Governor John Hoeven issued a flood emergency declaration for 10 North Dakota counties and the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation. The declaration was upgraded to a disaster declaration on April 20, 2004, when Governor Hoeven requested President Bush issue a Major Presidential Disaster Declaration for North Dakota.
- On May 5, 2004, President Bush declared 10 North Dakota counties and the Spirit Lake Indian Reservation a major disaster as a result of severe storms and flooding beginning March 26. Counties included as part of the initial disaster declaration are Benson, Cavalier, Grand Forks, Griggs, Nelson, Pembina, Ramsey, Steele, Traill and Walsh.
- On June 9, the disaster declaration was amended to include Bottineau, Burke, Mountrail, Renville, Towner, and Ward counties, making them eligible to apply for federal public assistance. These counties experienced widespread damage to rural electric cooperatives, as well as impacts to roads, bridges and culverts.
- A FEMA/State Disaster Field Office (DFO) was established May 7 in Bismarck to serve as an administrative office and processing center for recovery operations. There are currently 43 federal, state and contract employees based at the Bismarck DFO.
- A FEMA/State Agreement was signed June 1, 2004, to formalize disaster operations. As part of this agreement, Governor Hoeven requested the state Division of Emergency Management take the lead in administering disaster assistance.

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- The first federal funds have been obligated to the state as reimbursement for eligible projects. As grantee, the state will administer funds to local applicants. As more projects are approved, additional funds will be obligated to the state for disbursement.
- Seventy-four “Requests for Public Assistance” have been received from officials in state and local jurisdictions in the declared areas. These requests are notices from state or local jurisdictions or private non-profits to request federal assistance.
- Seventeen state field inspectors are verifying damages and writing projects that may be eligible for federal aid. In addition, three FEMA technical support teams are working in areas that require a particular expertise, including a team that is working current issues related to Devils Lake.
- The disaster also includes assistance through a state-administered Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP). This program provides grants to states and local governments to implement long-term mitigation measures after a major disaster declaration, with the goal of reducing loss of life and property due to natural disasters by enabling mitigation measures to be implemented in the aftermath of a disaster.
- All North Dakota counties and four tribal nations are eligible to apply for HMGP assistance. Applicant briefings were held in Grand Forks, June 8, and Devils Lake, June 9.
- Public Assistance and HMGP applicant briefings for the six add-on counties – Bottineau, Burke, Mountrail, Renville, Towner and Ward – will be held at 12:30 p.m. Friday, June 18, at the Bottineau County Courthouse in Bottineau.
- Initial damage assessments conducted jointly by FEMA and the state of North Dakota in April indicated that no homes were destroyed; however, the majority of the homes receiving floodwater were minimally affected. State officials and the state’s Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) are working together to assist households that may have a significant need. Individuals affected by the disaster who continue to have serious unmet needs are asked to contact their local emergency manager.

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